DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 105 CG 030 308

AUTHOR Geiger, Brian F.; Willis, A. Sandra
TITLE Leadership Skills Training for Youths through the Exploring Program of Boy Scouts of America.
PUB DATE 2000-08-00
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperation; Empowerment; *High School Students; High Schools; *Leadership Training; Personal Autonomy; Self Efficacy; Self Evaluation (Individuals)
IDENTIFIERS Alabama (Birmingham); *Boy Scouts of America

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Leadership Opportunity Forums for high school students sponsored by the Explorer's Post of the Birmingham Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The goal of the forum was to increase student leadership behaviors through informational sessions, needs assessment, informal discussions, shared meals, outdoor physical activities, and cooperative social/recreation time. Students greatly enjoyed the opportunities to learn more about themselves and receive peer support and guidance from interested adult facilitators. The combination of instruction about leadership characteristics with individual assessment group exercises was effective in promoting the development of leadership skills in youth. As a result of the forum, each student drafted a personal plan to continue self-exploration and growth as community leaders. Figure 1 is "Sample Agenda for First Day of Leadership Opportunity Forum"; Figure 2 is "Questions for Small Group Discussions"; Figure 3 is "Student Worksheets for Leadership Development." (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 444 105

CG

Leadership Skills Training for Youths Through the Exploring Program of Boy Scouts of America

Brian F. Geiger, Ed.D.*
*Corresponding Author
Associate Professor
Department of Human Studies
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Room EB 207
1530 3rd Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35294-1250
205-934-8326, fax 205-975-8040
Email bgeiger@uab.edu

And

A. Sandra Willis, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Psychology
Samford University

Submitted to *ERIC*, August 2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B. GEIGER
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CG30308

Leadership Skills Training for Youths Through the Exploring Program of Boy Scouts of America

Abstract

Birmingham area high school students participated in the Leadership Opportunity Forums during the summers of 1994 and 1995. The Forums were sponsored by the Explorer's Post of the Birmingham Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The goal of the Forums was to increase student leadership behaviors through informational sessions, needs assessments, informal discussions, shared meals, outdoor physical activities, and cooperative social/recreation time.

Leadership Skills Training for Youths Through the Exploring Program of Boy Scouts of America

High school students in the Birmingham, AL metropolitan area were selected by teachers and community leaders to participate in week-long residential Leadership Opportunity Forums held at Camp Winnataska in St. Clair County during the summers of 1994 and 1995. The Forums were sponsored by the Explorer's Post of the Birmingham Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America together with public school systems in Birmingham City, and Jefferson, Shelby, and St. Clair Counties. The facilitators of the Forums included Boy Scout administrators and Exploring Program youth staff, and health, psychology, and substance abuse prevention professionals from the Birmingham area.

Leadership Opportunity Forum Program Goals and Explanation

The goal of the Forums was to increase student leadership behaviors through individual identification of strengths and weaknesses, skill training, and goal-setting. Forum activities included informational sessions and personal needs assessment, informal peer discussions, shared meals, guided physical activities, and social/recreation time (see Figure 1 for day one agenda). This brief manuscript will describe the teaching methods and results of one session of the Forum entitled, "Your Leadership Profile."

Under the direction of a doctoral-level trained health

educator and doctoral-level psychologist, students from Birmingham area high schools were asked to imagine a significant accomplishment in their future and write a sample newspaper article to describe their achievement. Students were encouraged to be creative and avoid the temptation to censure their ideas at this point due to concern about practical issues or fear of criticism by others. They were directed to write about the preparation required to reach this accomplishment and obstacles they would have to overcome. Students shared their newspaper feature articles with peers and discussed their future aspirations.

Following this exercise, students individually completed the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI) (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985). This inventory is self-administered and self-scoring and is used to help students in grades 4-12 assess their current strengths and weaknesses as peer leaders. The LSI includes skills necessary for leadership development grouped into nine categories: Fundamentals of Leadership, Written Communication Skills, Speech Communication Skills, Values Clarification, Decision Making Skills, Group Dynamic Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Personal Skills, and Planning Skills. Students answered each item on the Likert scale by marking a single response. Using their raw scores from the nine categories of leadership skills, students graphed a leadership profile.

Trained facilitators interpreted the results of the LSI and led small group discussions about developing leadership skills for academic, vocational, and social success. Prepared questions were used to direct group discussions (see Figure 2). Students were

encouraged to share their ideas and concerns in a safe group environment. Group rules included no peer criticism or derision.

Understanding of leadership skills builds over time. Students were encouraged to complete two worksheets later that same evening, or on the second day of the Forum. The first was a values clarification exercise provided in the LSI Activities Manual (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985). Students read a list of 13 values, for instance, "to become famous," and ranked each in order of personal priority.

The second worksheet directed students to write two lists. The first was a listing of personal strengths, the second was a listing of preferences. Students rank ordered these items and then considered the "fit" between personal strengths, values, interests, and career goals (see Figure 3) (Bolles, 1985).

Results

Students greatly enjoyed the opportunities to learn more about themselves and receive peer support and guidance from interested adult facilitators. The combination of instruction about leadership characteristics with individual assessment group exercises was effective to promote development of leadership skills in youths. As a result of the Leadership Opportunity Forum, each student drafted a personal plan to continue self-exploration and growth as community leaders. Groups of Explorers will plan and conduct community service projects. The Birmingham Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America will continue Exploring activities with Forum participants throughout the academic year to provide students

with regular guidance and to encourage achievement of personal goals.

References

Bolles, R.N. (1985). What color is your parachute? A practical manual for job hunters and career changers. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Karnes, F.A. & Chauvin, J.C. (1985). Leadership Skills Inventory. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

	Time	*Activity*
A.M.	8:30	Registration
	9:45	Opening Ceremony
	10:15	Icebreaker - "Getting to Know You"
	11:15	Break
	11:25	What are Feelings of Self-Worth?
P.M.		
	12:15	Break
	12:30	Lunch
	* 1:15	Your Leadership Profile
	3:00	Break - Prep for afternoon's activities
	3:20	Report to assigned activity area
	3:30	Horseback riding, swimming, or boating
	4:30	Rotate to next activity (horses, swimming, or boating)
	5:30	Free Time - Recreation
	6:00	Supper
	7:00	Setting Personal Goals, Short-Term and Long-Term Identifying Your Own Strengths and Weaknesses
	7:30	Developing a Plan for Self-Improvement
	8:30	Announcements and Recreation Time
	10:00	Prepare for Bed
	11:00	Lights Out

Figure 1: Sample Agenda for the First Day of the Leadership Opportunity Forum

GOOD AND BAD ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP

1. Why would someone want to be a leader?

2. Why do people leave well-paying jobs to become government leaders?

3. What benefits do leaders receive from their work?

4. What are some negative aspects of being a leader?

5. How can you balance the positive and negative aspects of leadership?

Figure 2: Questions for Small Group Discussion

First, write down your *PERSONAL STRENGTHS*, the things you do well. Only you will see this list. Answer honestly.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Secondly, RANK ORDER your *Personal Strengths* from most to least.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Figure 3: Student Worksheet for Leadership Development, Part I

Thirdly, write down your *PERSONAL PREFERENCES*, the things you most enjoy doing.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Fourthly, RANK ORDER your *Personal Preferences* from most to least.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Figure 3: Student Worksheet for Leadership Development, Part II

DON'T WAIT!!!

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Look at the worksheet, "VALUES IN MY LIFE" and compare the rank order of personal values to your rankings of PERSONAL STRENGTHS (the things you are good at doing), and PERSONAL PREFERENCES (the things you most enjoy doing).

Think about what you can do now to learn more about careers and occupations that match your VALUES, STRENGTHS, and PREFERENCES.

Talk to people about how they chose their careers.

Speak to your parents or guardian, school guidance counselor, Explorer Director, librarian, or other adult you trust about your career plans and concerns.

Read more about leadership roles in careers that are similar to your goals.

Consider volunteering in a business, agency, or workplace that employs persons in the career you are interested in learning more about.

Figure 3: Student Worksheet for Leadership Development, Part III